

# Social Questions

of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

VOLUME 32

APRIL, 1942

NUMBER 4

# Negroes in a Fighting Democracy

*By* ROY WILKINS

(Assistant Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Editor of *The Crisis*.)

The fact that Japan, a colored nation, is now our enemy has made the topic of race discrimination in the war one of major importance. This was recognized by President Roosevelt in his address to the Congress January 6, 1942, when he said: "We must guard against divisions among ourselves. . . . We must be particularly vigilant against racial discrimination in any of its ugly forms."

The racial policies of the United Nations are important not only because of the presence of thirteen million Negroes in the American population, but because of India, China, the Philippines and Hawaii, and the many Latin-American and South American Republics upon whom the United Nations are depending in their battle against the Axis powers.

It is natural, therefore, that the treatment which America accords its Negro minority will be scrutinized closely, not only by the Axis for counter-propaganda purposes, but by the colored peoples whose support we need in order to win.

#### **NEED FOR MANPOWER**

It is very evident that we will need every ounce of manpower we possess if the Axis nations are to be defeated.

Despite this great need, the fact remains that America is refusing to utilize fully the moral and physical strength of its Negro citizens. The treatment of the Negro in the war effort has been such as not only to deny America much-needed manpower, but to discourage, embitter and neutralize Negroes in the struggle.

The great cry of the day is for production and more production. It would seem that every man capable of aiding in the production of planes, tanks, guns, ships, and other supplies would be put to work without delay. Yet, with some few exceptions, Negroes who seek employment in the war industries are denied jobs.

This situation was so serious last summer that President Roosevelt was induced to issue an executive order, No. 8802, on June 25, 1941, abolishing racial discrimination in employment in factories filling what at that time were called defense orders. This executive order created the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, whose duty was to uncover racial discrimination in employment and to attempt to correct that condition.

Hearings on complaints of racial discrimination have been held by the committee in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Most employers cited to appear before the committee have denied any policy of race discrimination, but many of them could not explain why they had either no Negro employees, or very few in certain restricted categories. One airplane plant in the Los Angeles area pointed proudly to the fact that it had some 200 Negro janitors! Another large manufacturer in the Chicago area told the committee, under oath, without blinking an eye, that his company did not discriminate against Negroes, but that it had no Negroes on the payroll!

In many instances, the committee has found that employers are giving "token" employment to Negro workers so as to refute the charge of discriminatory employment policies.

In March, 1941, the North American Aviation Company announced that under no circumstances would it employ Negroes in its new Kansas City, Kan., bomber plant except as janitors, but that policy has been revised after conferences with the OPM (now the WPB), and Negroes are employed as sheet metal workers and in other capacities in Kansas City. The Bell Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo, N. Y., builder of the famous Airacobra fighting planes, is listed as being fair to Negroes. The Glenn L. Martin plant at Middle River, Md., has taken on a few Negroes, and has indicated it will employ some more.

Perhaps the greatest employment of Negroes in aircraft factories will occur when the giant Willow Run plant of the Ford Motor Company goes into full production near Ypsilanti, Mich., in June. The Ford Company announced in advance that it would employ Negroes on the same basis as it had employed them in its automobile plant. If it maintains the ratio, the chances are that one-eighth to one-tenth of the Willow Run employees will be Negroes.

On the other hand, the Boeing Company of Seattle, and the huge United Aircraft plant at East Hartford, Conn., are still lily-white.

Figures from the Board of Education of the City of New York show that some 3,400 Negroes have been trained in war industry skills, but that only 150 have been placed, whereas about 80% of the white boys so trained have been placed.

In the shipyards, there is a little better picture than in the aircraft industries, but not much better. One plant, the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, is the shining example in this industry, for it has more than 5,000 Negroes employed in practically every capacity—skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. Negroes are employed in other shipyards in varying numbers, but in the San Fran-

cisco yards of the Bethlehem Steel Company, the chief obstacle to their employment as machinists was found to be the International Association of Machinists, and not the employers. It was only after this machinists' union was cited to high officials of the War Production Board, and, it is rumored, to The White House itself, that the international president relented and put the necessary pressure on the San Francisco local so that Negro machinists could go to work.

The picture is a spotty one, but the evidence is unmistakable that on the whole, industry has failed to use the productive manpower available among American Negroes to turn out the war materials in the volume necessary for victory.

### THE CIVILIAN FRONT

A fruitful source of Axis propaganda to the colored nations of the Far East and South America has been the treatment of the Negro as a citizen, not only the traditional treatment, but that enforced even after Pearl Harbor. Three items have been deemed important enough for German and Japanese short-wave broadcasts and Japanese leaflets:

(1) The riot at Alexandria, La., January 6, 1942, in which a dozen or more Negro soldiers were shot by civilian police and state troopers. It seems that the regulations for Negro soldiers coming into Alexandria from nearby camps were so onerous that a clash of some kind was inevitable. It took only the tactless action of a white military policeman to precipitate a fight.

(2) The second incident was the lynching and burning of a Negro in Sikeston, Mo., on Sunday morning, January 25, 1942. The victim, Cleo Wright, had been shot three times while he was being apprehended, and never could have escaped from the jail. Nevertheless, a mob of some 300 persons stuffed the wounded man in the trunk of an automobile, hauled him to the Negro section of Sikeston, tied his body to the bumper and dragged it through the streets of the section, winding up in the yard of a Negro schoolhouse where they doused the body with gasoline and burned it.

(3) The third item involved the occupancy of Negro war workers of the Sojourner Truth defense housing project in Detroit, Mich. This project of 200 units was built for Negro occupancy and named for the famous Negro woman abolitionist. Nevertheless, when Negro tenants were ordered to move in on the morning of February 28, a mob of white residents in the vicinity, aided by the Detroit police, barricaded the streets, halted moving vans, and successfully prevented Negro occupancy. To date (March 30) nothing has been done except that the federal government has reiterated its position that Negroes must occupy the homes.

Other items on the civilian front that have not improved the already low state of Negro morale have been (a) the announcement of the American Red Cross that it would cease refusing to accept Negro blood for processing into plasma, but would segregate Negro blood from that received from white donors, even though it admitted that scientifically there is no difference in the blood, (b) the tentative plans in some areas for jim-crow air-raid shelters, (c) the exclusion of Negroes from OCD activities in some few places, and the jim-crowing of them in others.

### THE ARMED FORCES

Unquestionably the greatest resentment among Negroes in the war effort has been occasioned by the treatment of their men in the armed forces. There were at the end of 1941 about 110,000 Negroes in the Army, and it was announced early in 1942 that 175,000 more would be taken in this year. The Army has maintained—with the exception of its officers' training schools—a system of complete segregation so that there are no Negro and white enlisted men serving in the same units. The Army has expanded its jim-crow policy, however, so as to admit Negroes into every major branch. On March 7, five Negro air cadets were graduated from the jim-crow Tuskegee training base, received their wings, and were commissioned as second lieutenants in the Air Corps.

The chief complaint against the Army, and the one which has stirred both Negro soldiers and civilians, is that the Army has surrendered completely to local prejudices and has compelled its Negro soldiers to accept humiliating and discriminatory treatment in and about the camps where they are stationed. Moreover, the charge is made and substantiated that even in those sections of the country which do not have a tradition of segregation, the white officers of Negro units, most of whom are southerners, have insisted on imposing a pattern of segregation for their troops.

The beatings and shootings of Negro soldiers in southern camps have aroused the Negro population. It is maintained that the War Department ought to insist upon fair treatment for all soldiers in uniform without regard to color, no matter where they may be stationed.

The Army has need of a large number of civilian technicians, and has been calling frantically for men in certain categories, but unfailingly Negro radio technicians, electricians, and other highly skilled men have been turned down, oftentimes after they have answered telegraphic appointments.

Negroes do not expect the millenium in this war effort. They do not place the solution of their difficulties above the welfare of their country. But they feel their problems are identified so clearly with the announced aims of the war effort that morally, as well as in enlightened self-interest, America must take firm steps toward their solution.

*(Editor's note: Secretary Knox of the Navy has just announced that Negroes are henceforth to be enlisted in naval and marine combat units and that they may expect to be promoted according to merit but to noncommissioned ranks only.)*

## Anti-Semitism

By M. I. FINKELSTEIN

(Executive Secretary, American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom.\*)

Speaking in Omaha recently, Richard Gutsadt, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, stated that the Axis has spent \$350,000,000 to \$400,000,000 on anti-Semitic propaganda in America alone (*The Jewish Press*, Omaha, March 20, 1942). These huge sums are the necessary starting point for our discussion. Contemporary anti-Semitism, regardless of whether American anti-Semites consciously or unconsciously will it so, is preeminently

\* The views expressed are the author's personal views.

a military weapon, a Nazi instrument to hinder the war effort of the United Nations.

The "line" of most of the professional anti-Semites is remarkably integrated and flexible in character. Every shift in the military position of the Axis, and particularly in the relationship of the United States to the war, has been accompanied by a parallel shift in most of the anti-Semitic propaganda. Anti-Semitism is a means, not an end. The goal, whether intentional or unintentional, is some form of Fascism in America. The immediate aim of most anti-Semites is to disrupt the war effort by dividing and confusing the people. That is why anti-Semitism is inextricably linked with anti-labor, anti-Roosevelt, anti-United Nations, anti-British, pro-Hitler, and, above all, anti-Bolshevist propaganda, in exact imitation of the original Nazi pattern in Germany.

When American aid to the United Nations began to be a serious factor last summer, and as direct American participation in the war became more and more imminent, an anti-Semitic chorus reached a crescendo around the "Jewish warmonger" lie. Pearl Harbor forced a cessation of this phase of the campaign. The public reaction to the Japanese attack made it necessary for even the most outspoken of the anti-Semitic appeasers to avow support of our government and to avoid the more obviously Hitlerite formulations.

### THE ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK

It is difficult to estimate the precise number of anti-Semitic organizations and publications in the country. They move around and change their names so often that the total picture is never too clear. Nor is it an easy problem in definition to decide whether an organization shall be classed in the anti-Semitic group or in some related category. We may accept as a basis the 119 named in a careful study by Donald S. Strong (*Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, American Council on Public Affairs, 1939). Of these, *only five came into existence before Hitler's accession to power*. Nine were founded in 1933, 19 in 1934, 13 in 1935, 18 in 1936, 22 in 1937, 24 in 1938, and 9 (figures incomplete) in 1939.

The headquarters are distributed as follows: New England 3, New York 27 (all but one in New York City), Pennsylvania-OHIO-West Virginia 8, Indiana-Illinois 25, Michigan-Wisconsin 3, Maryland-Washington, D. C., 8, the southern seaboard states 8, Alabama 1, Tennessee 1—total east of the Mississippi 84; Minnesota 2, Kansas 1, Nebraska 1, North Dakota 1, Missouri 3, Texas-Louisiana 4, Pacific Coast 20. These are minimum figures for 1939; a more complete analysis will be found in Mr. Strong's book.

### ANTI-SEMITIC ARTICLES

On February 24, in his message on the 22nd anniversary of the Nazi party, Hitler once again sounded the "Jewish warmonger" theme: "Just as was the case in our own country during and after the first World War, so it is today only the Jews, and again and again the Jews who are responsible for conflicts among nations."

*Social Justice*, which had been comparatively restrained after December 7th, echoed Hitler in its March 16th issue as follows: "We repeat that for persecutions suffered by six hundred thousand Jews in Germany, the world was catapulted into a 'sacred war' of economic boycott."

Two weeks later the March 28th issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* appeared with Milton Mayer's "The Case Against the Jews." The fact that the author was born a Jew is irrelevant. The *Post* has a circulation in the millions. It crosses all class and regional barriers, something hardly one of the 119 organizations is equipped to do. This magazine, a consistent spokesman of appeasement and reaction all through the pre-war years, opened its pages to a full salvo of anti-Semitism. From this springboard, Mr. Mayer goes on to condemn the American people as a whole and to preach mutual distrust and contempt.

### OPPOSITION TO ANTI-SEMITISM

Fortunately there is another side of the coin. The reaction to the *Post* article was instantaneous and healthy. Freedom House, for example, broadcast a denunciation of "this sickening article" which "contained practically every known anti-Semitic libel manufactured by Goebbels."

More and more people are learning that anti-Semitism menaces everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, and have begun to oppose it in an organized way, even in its "polite," country club manifestations.

Last June the administration began its campaign to break down job discrimination. The President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice has worked resolutely and with considerable success, despite inadequate funds and limited powers. Yet, at the Committee's New York hearings on February 16-17, 1942, Dr. J. X. Cohen testified that between April and November, 1941, the percentage of "Christians Only" advertisements in the New York press rose from 29 to 32%. (See March *Jewish Survey*.)

The Department of Justice is now beginning to take a hand also. George W. Christians and several other veteran "hate" propagandists have been indicted and there are promises of more to come. Pelley's *The Galilean*, has suspended publication. The March 30th issue of *Social Justice* is on the defensive. A banner headline reads: "JEWS PLOT TO BAN SOCIAL JUSTICE." The truth is that newspapers and individuals all over the country have been asking for its suppression. *Social Justice*, however, directs its fire against the magazine *Jewish Survey*. No effort is made to deny the charge that Coughlin and *Social Justice* are part of Hitler's fifth column. There is only a restatement of the stock anti-Semitic falsehoods, culminating in the threat that, if *Social Justice* should cease publication either because of government action or by its own volition, "the pogroms which crimsoned the soil of Europe would rank as a poor second to what would occur on the streets of New York." Such threats should not be taken too lightly.

### RECENT ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS

Several adolescents in New York City were just arrested for beating up Jewish boys in the streets.

Two nineteen-year-old Philadelphians have been sent to prison as ringleaders of a gang that invaded and wrecked a store and assaulted the Jewish owner, while shouting "we give you the same treatment as Hitler gave the Jews."

On April 1st, two days after it had devoted ten pages to proof of "Charles E. Coughlin's seditious influence" and to a plea for government action, the newspaper *PM* reported intimidation of its dealers. A mimeographed leaflet distributed by the intimidators ended on this note: "For the sake of American peace and unity, we request every

**ANTI-SEMITISM (Continued)**

dealer to have nothing to do" with *PM*, "a communistic and an anti-Christian publication." There stand the elements of Nazi propaganda woven together in one short paragraph. There stands the enemy in our midst.

It is not merely the safety of the Jew that is at stake. It is the future of the world!

**M.F.S.S. National Conference**

Our Thirty-fifth Anniversary Conference is to be held at the Epworth-Euclid Methodist Church, 1919 East 107th St., Cleveland, Ohio, May 26, 27, 28, 1942. (The Federation was first envisaged in Worth M. Tippy's study, when he was pastor of Epworth Church in 1907.)

Among the speakers at the Conference will be Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Dr. Harry F. Ward, Charles C. Webber; Dr. Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Executive Secretary, Division of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Church; and Miss Thelma Stevens, Executive Secretary of the Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities of the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church.

Mark the dates on your calendar! Plan to attend!

**Harry F. Ward Dinner**

A dinner to mark the Thirty-fifth Anniversary of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, and to honor Dr. Ward's distinguished services during that period, is to be held at the Town Hall Club, 123 West 43rd St., New York City, Wednesday, April 22nd, at 7 P.M.

Among the outstanding sponsors are Russell Bowie, Julien Bryan, Congressman John M. Coffee, Henry Sloane Coffin, Sherwood Eddy, Bishop Charles K. Gilbert, Corliss Lamont, Henry Van Dusen, Mary Van Kleeck, Rose Schneiderman, and James Waterman Wise.

Bishop Francis J. McConnell, President of the Federation, will preside at the dinner. The speakers, in addition to Dr. Ward, will be Prof. Clyde R. Miller of Teachers College, New York City, Rev. Thomas L.

Harris, and Rev. Charles C. Webber.

The subject of Dr. Ward's address will be: "Objectives of the Anti-Soviet Front." He will make an analysis of the trend of public opinion based on his experiences and observations of the past three months while traveling across the United States and Canada.

Tickets at \$1.75 per cover can be secured from Charles C. Webber, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. (Proceeds above expenses will go to the 35th Anniversary Fund.)

**Doctor Ward's Trip**

Doctor Ward reports that he has had large and enthusiastic audiences in Canada during March.

His April schedule calls for his speaking in Toronto, Windsor, Kingston, Montreal, and Boston.

**Wallace and Dies**

Vice-President Henry Wallace on March 29, 1942, issued a public statement which reads in part as follows:

"I have been informed of an open letter written me by Representative Martin Dies regarding certain employes of the Board of Economic Warfare. If Mr. Dies were genuinely interested in helping our war effort, he would have discussed this matter with me as soon as it came to his attention. He did not; rather, he is seeking to inflame the public mind by malicious distortion of facts which he did not want to check with me. . . . We are at war, and the doubts and anger which this and similar statements of Mr. Dies tend to arouse in the public mind might as well come from Goebbels himself so far as their practical effect is concerned. As a matter of fact, the effect on our morale would be less damaging if Mr. Dies were on the Hitler payroll. . . .

"Any man who seeks to undermine faith in our government by a malicious use of isolated facts is a greater danger to our national safety than thousands of Axis soldiers within our borders."

Wire or write immediately to Representative John Cochran, chairman of the House Accounts Committee, House Office Bldg., Washington, D. C., expressing your opposition to an appropriation for the Dies Committee!

**35th Anniversary Fund**

Dear Federation Member:

You, no doubt, fully intended to send in a check in response to my letter about the Methodist Federation for Social Service Thirty-fifth Anniversary Fund. I am sure you want to do your part, but just in case it slipped your mind, this is a reminder—just as personal as if I were to send you another letter.

To date only 383 of our members (about 12 per cent) have responded to the appeals for contributions. In consequence, we still owe the Amalgamated Bank \$1,000.

The form below, returned with your check, will register your concern over the Federation's 1942 program, especially the publication of the **SOCIAL QUESTIONS BULLETIN**.

Thank you!

Fraternally yours,  
FRANCIS J. McCONNELL.

**METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE,**  
150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the  
35th Anniversary Fund.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Questions BULLETIN**

Issued monthly, except July, August and September. The general policies of this publication are determined by the Executive Committee of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, subject to approval by the National Committee of the Federation. The selection of topics and material is committed to the Secretaries who are responsible to the Federation and to the public for its accuracy.

**Membership \$1.00 per year**  
**Special rate to student groups.**

**SECRETARIES**

Harry F. Ward  
Charles C. Webber

**OFFICERS**

Bishop Francis J. McConnell, President  
Harris Franklin Ball, Vice-President  
Gilbert Q. LeSourd, Secretary-Treasurer

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

E. Raymond Attebery	David D. Jones
Lester W. Auman	John C. Lazeyn
James C. Baker	Halford E. Lucock
Wade C. Barclay	George L. Poor
Mary McLeod Bethune	H. M. Ratliff
Esther Blomberg	Miriam Ristine
Edgar Blake	Chester A. Smith
Gilbert S. Cox	Ralph B. Urmy
Margaret Forsyth	Edgar M. Wahlberg
Amos B. Herlacher	Ruth F. Wolcott

**The METHODIST FEDERATION for SOCIAL SERVICE**

150 Fifth Avenue, New York City

Re-entered as second class matter October 9, 1941, at the Postoffice at New York, N. Y., under the Act of August 24, 1912.